

# Gender Communication Differences and strategies



# **Gender Communication Differences and Strategies**

- Often times men and women use different processes for decision making and leadership. Here are some common ways that men and women differ.
- What can your organization do to create more equality for men and women? The first step to creating equality is understanding the different strengths and styles that different genders bring to the work table. Oftentimes men and women use different processes for decision making and leadership.

# Here are some common ways that men and women differ

- *Attitude towards tasks vs. relationships.*
- *Way of Processing Information.*
- *Leadership Style.*
- *Communication Styles.*
- *Talk time*

## ***Attitude towards tasks vs. relationships***

Women tend to be more relationship oriented and accomplish tasks by building relationships first. They then know who to ask and are comfortable asking others to get things done. Men tend to be more task oriented and go straight to the task. They build their relationships when they are in the task or project.

## ***Way of Processing Information***

- When women have to make a decision they will often process and look at options out loud while men tend to process internally until they come up with a solution. Women often think that the man is being unresponsive to suggestions because of this and men often think that women are looking for approval when they process out loud or don't know what they are doing. Some men think that a woman's way of processing is a sign of weakness.



# ***Leadership Style***

- ***Leadership Style.*** Because women are more relationship oriented, they tend to lead by consensus. Men tend to be more hierarchical and include only the people closest to them at their level in the decision making process when they think it is necessary.

# ***Communication Styles***

- In non-verbal behavior women will nod their head to show that they are listening. Men leave the conversation thinking that a head nod means agreement and will be surprised to find out that the woman didn't agree at all. When a woman is speaking to a man and he does not say anything and stays in neutral body language to show that he is listening, a woman will interpret that as the man being bored or not understanding what she is saying. This can lead the woman to become very uncomfortable and repeat what she is saying or ask the man each time if he understands what she is saying.

# ***Communication Styles***

- The man then interprets that as insecurity, or talking to much and which then lead him to think she is not assertive or confident to be a leader. Women will actually use more direct eye contact in conversation to create relationship and connection while many men take that as a challenge to their power or position.



# ***Communication Styles***

- Women will also approach a man from the front while men often approach from the side at an angle (or behind), which is how each of them tends to stand or sit when talking to others. Men interpret the face to face as too personal, or aggressive and women will interpret the talking side to side as though he is not being upfront or even hiding something from her.

## ***Talk time***

- Men take up more time and space at meetings, while women try to make sure there is more equality in the room. Despite stereotypes to the contrary studies have shown that men talk more than women. Men interrupt women and talk over them much more than women interrupt men.

## ***Talk time***

- All of this can lead to the type of miscommunication based on assumptions of why member of the other sex are using certain verbal and non-verbal behaviors. These miscommunications can result in team breakdown, people not listening to each other and loss of good ideas.

# **Strategies to Bridge Gender Differences and Value Diverse Styles**

- If you grasp the importance of effective gender communications and gender equality in the workplace, then start making a difference today using the following gender communication strategies

# Strategies to Bridge Gender Differences and Value Diverse Styles

- *Take these facts with a grain of salt.*
- *Stay aware.*
- *Be aware.*
- *Recognize* that many different styles of leadership can be effective.
- *Men*, be aware of time and space
- *Women*, get comfortable asserting more space for yourself.
- *Finally, Get Information.*



## *Take these facts with a grain of salt*

- It's important not to use this information to stereotype all men or all women. Of course not everyone fits these generalizations. These are cultural norms based on research that showed that a large majority of men and women display some of these characteristics. Some of these behaviors are based on acculturation and learning and some of them are based on how our brains work.

## *Stay aware*

- Both men and women need to be aware of each others styles of communication both verbal and non-verbal in order to avoid miscommunication and work better together.

# Be Aware

- *Be aware* of unconscious stereotypes and biases and be open to breaking past them in order to leverage each others strengths.

# *Recognize*

- *Recognize* that many different styles of leadership can be effective.

## *Men*, be aware of time and space

- *Men*, be aware of how much time and space in meetings or group interaction. Make room for the contributions of women. When asked for a decision by a women or for your opinion if you are an internal processor, let her know you are in process of thinking about it so she knows she is heard.



*Women*, get comfortable asserting more space for yourself.

- When dealing with men in decision making, try to stop yourself from processing out loud. If you do process out loud, let the man know that this is a process you use for decision making and you are not asking him what to do.

## *Get Information*

- Learn about male and female styles of communication and be able to use both. You need both to deal with the complexity and diversity of situations in today's world both personally and professionally. Don't be afraid to recognize differences. Once you do that it will be easier to have open discussions in order to find similarities and use those differences to achieve greater goals together.

*Any Questions?*